

MEMORANDUM

TO: CHARLES LISTER
FROM: KEITH TEEL
DATE: 6 DECEMBER 1990
RE: HEARINGS OF THE EPA SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

On December 4 and 5 1990, the Scientific Advisory Board of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency met in Washington, D.C., to review the draft risk assessment concerning ETS which had been prepared by EPA staff personnel. While the panel was highly critical of the draft, they nevertheless tentatively concluded that ETS causes lung cancer in some non-smoking wives of smoking husbands. In response to questions from the press following the hearings, the Chairman of the SAB stated that the panel's conclusions focused on non-smoking wives of smokers because most of the studies concern such women, but he speculated that persons who are exposed to similar doses of ETS in other situations (the workplace, social settings, etc.) would face similar lung cancer risks.

In addition to the lung cancer finding, the SAB also reviewed the portion of the risk assessment which suggested an association between ETS and childhood respiratory diseases. While the panel was extremely critical of the EPA's discussion of this matter in the risk assessment, the SAB members nevertheless felt that the evidence was stronger for a causal link between ETS and childhood respiratory diseases than was suggested in the EPA draft. The panel suggested that, if EPA wishes to retain the discussion of childhood respiratory diseases in the document, it should strengthen that discussion. The board members also suggested that EPA might want to consider conducting a risk assessment regarding other possible non-cancer health effects.

It is likely to be some months before the SAB's written report on the hearings is released, and it will be even longer before a final risk assessment is released by EPA. At the conclusion of the hearings the board members were given assignments to write portions of the board's report. When the SAB draft report is complete, it must be reviewed by the SAB executive committee and then submitted to EPA. It is unlikely that the report will be submitted to the SAB executive committee before April 1991. It is not possible to speculate when the final risk assessment will be

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released, although the board was so highly critical of the current EPA draft that it could take many months to review and perhaps revise the document. It is also not clear whether the final risk assessment will address any issue other than ETS and lung cancer. Other alleged effects, such as respiratory effects in children, may well be considered in later documents.

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